

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 5 March 2008

Subject: Zero Waste Scotland - Implications for West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of a Waste Policy Statement made to the Scottish Parliament by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead MSP, on 24 January 2008 which set out the Scottish Government's new waste policy and its plans to move towards Zero Waste, which will have implications for West Dunbartonshire Council's recycling targets and plans to meet landfill allowances.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Cabinet Secretary announced that the Scottish Government would prepare a new National Waste Management Plan for Scotland, in consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the private waste industry, the community recycling sector and other key stakeholders.
- 2.2** The Cabinet Secretary announced the following key objectives and proposed targets:
- A strong emphasis on waste prevention with the aim of stopping the growth in municipal waste by 2010.
 - Increased priority for recycling and composting with the objective of achieving comparability with the highest performing countries in mainland Europe through a target of 70% recycling and composting of municipal waste by 2025. (The Scottish Government also expects to reach 40% recycling/composting by 2010; 50% by 2013 and 60% by 2020).
 - A further reduction target in the use of landfill with the aim that no more than 5% of municipal waste is landfilled by 2025.
 - Greater emphasis on commercial and industrial waste with new targets to be developed for reducing the amount of commercial and industrial waste sent to landfill.
- 2.3** In addition, the Cabinet Secretary announced that where energy from waste plants are proposed, the Scottish Government has a strong preference, in respect of both municipal waste and commercial / industrial waste, for energy from waste plants which demonstrate high levels of efficiency, such as Combined Heat and Power or District Heating.

2.4 The Cabinet Secretary also announced:

- The retention of the Landfill Allowance Scheme but the Scheme is to be reviewed by the Scottish Government and CoSLA.
- The establishment of a grant and support scheme of £2.5 million a year for recycling by the community sector.
- The establishment of a short-life working group with CoSLA to make recommendations on how £100 million of the new Zero Waste Fund should be allocated.
- A consultation on potential legislative provisions which could help implement Zero Waste. (these potential legislative provisions could be included in the Scottish Climate Change Bill).
- The establishment of a Zero Waste Think Tank, to provide advice to Government on moving towards Zero Waste.

2.5 The Scottish Government also noted that it is working to establish Outcome Agreements with local authorities and that the Outline Business Cases previously requested were no longer required.

3. Main Issues

3.1 During 2003 the then Scottish Executive (SE) formally adopted a National Waste Plan to deliver the National Waste Strategy (Scotland).

3.2 Between May 2005 and September 2006 West Dunbartonshire Council was successful in its applications for funding to consolidate existing, and develop new, recycling services. The funding awarded to the Council, approximately £23 million to 2020, will permit the Council to maintain recycling services and encourage the behavioural change required to meet outcomes agreed with the Government. The funding was allocated to enable the Council to achieve a 32% recycling performance. The Cabinet Secretary's announcement confirmed that this funding, which has until now been "ring fenced", has been allocated to the Council through the general local government settlement from April 2008.

3.3 During January 2006 a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the medium and longer term management of residual waste arising from the West Dunbartonshire area was submitted to the then Scottish Executive. The SOC was a joint submission with the Councils which form the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Waste Strategy Area Group. As a follow up to the SOC, the Group has been developing an Outline Business Case (OBC), which, when completed, would also have been submitted and reviewed by the Scottish Government. On 14 March 2007 the Scottish Government suggested that the Ayrshire Councils should consider working jointly with the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Group. From the Cabinet Secretary's statement it is evident that the SOC and OBC processes, developed to secure new technologies to meet medium to longer term landfill allowance requirements, are to be abandoned.

- 3.4** It is acknowledged that strategic waste planning is a complex subject and officers propose to arrange a series of presentations and a study visit for Members, prior to the next Committee in May 2008.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** None.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Whilst this report does not have direct financial implications, the Government's policy changes will have long term financial implications which will be evaluated and reported to Members at a future date.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** Not applicable at present.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The Scottish Government's preparation of a new National Waste Management Plan for Scotland will require Strategic Environmental Assessment and Regulatory and Equalities Impact Assessments. The implications of the new Plan on local government are unlikely to be clear until 2010/2011, accordingly, West Dunbartonshire Council will have to consider how the first target of 40% recycling/composting by 2010 is to be achieved
- 7.2** It is clear that the dynamics of the Scottish Government's waste policy has dramatically changed and while the Council has been funded to meet an agreed outcome of 32% recycling, the new recycling targets will bring about financial, technical and local waste policy challenges for the Council. It is also evident that the SOC and OBC processes, developed to secure new technologies to meet medium to longer term landfill allowance requirements, are no longer required. Accordingly, the Council will face further medium and longer term challenges to meet its landfill allowance obligations.
- 7.3** The Scottish Government has acknowledged the importance of waste policy and the clear link between sustainable waste management and tackling climate change, energy efficiency and growing Scotland's economy sustainably. The Scottish Government has recognised that waste policy must be integrated and combine both recycling and residual waste treatment, and has undertaken to review the landfill allowance scheme in consultation with local authorities and CoSLA and set up a working group and a think tank to develop its waste policy.
- 7.4** West Dunbartonshire Council will participate in these consultations, working groups and think tanks as required and actively assist in the development of new sustainable waste policy.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) notes this report and agrees that a further more detailed report on the short, medium and longer term implications of the recent national policy changes for West Dunbartonshire Council will be submitted to a future Council meeting.
- b) notes that a date will be arranged for Members to receive presentations and site visit to consider the full implications of the National Waste Plan.

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Date: 20 February 2008

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Appendices: Scottish Government - Waste Policy Statement
(Letter entitled; Waste Policy Statement from Richard Grant, Deputy Director - Environmental Quality Directorate, Scottish Government)

Background Papers: Report to Community Safety and Environmental Services on 3 March 2004, entitled Landfill Allowance Regulations
Report to Community Safety and Environmental Services on 2 February 2005, entitled Landfill Allowance Scheme
Report to Community Safety and Environmental Services on 11 January 2006, entitled Waste Management Strategic Outline Case

Wards Affected: All Wards